



Issue: 33

Period: June to December 2009

Editor: Michael Ursu

**From: Michael Ursu,  
TAS Swimming Director**

**Dear All,**



Since the end of 2008, TAS aquatic centre has seen changes within its own ranks. Olympian Morgan Knabe and Bill Evens are the new additions to the aquatic centre team.

In 2010 we look forward to continue enhancing the role we play in the sport of swimming within this region

and beyond.

I am confident of the fact that as a swimming program, we have a sound foundation in place but we must not be complacent to presume that this allows us to not continue striving for better.

Our staff team has had a very hectic program during Term 4, 2009.

As well as focussing on preparing our athletes for State championships and other major competitions, our staff took a lot of professional care with three of our major customers: St Marys School, Bentley Park Junior, White Rock State.

The results were excellent and I would like to congratulate: Don Christensen, Debbie Houston, Bill Evens, Morgan Knabe, Kate Christensen and Michelle Williams for an excellent job.

One only has to attend the last State Championships to realise how strong the competition was.

As in the past the State Swimming Championships in December this year provided some outstanding swims by some members of our TAS Team.

The results of swimmers like Kotuku Ngawati, Jack Gerrard, Clinton Cave, Tessa Jackson, Rachael Gilholm, Daniel Esposito, Tiarni Westby, Bogdan Uricianu, Katie Schmidt, Tegan McCarthy, Isabel

Byrne, Ciara Cescotto, Mark Ragel, Marcus Bushels and not to forget the young swimmers who travelled to Brisbane to swim in the relays, the like of Jack Hare, Georgia Weeden, are just a few of the names who made up the successful team.

The club came 22<sup>nd</sup> out of 186 clubs attending the championships.

As with all major competitions there are bound to be disappointments but these are disappointments which provide the basis from which athletes can strive for bigger and better things in the future.

There is always room for improvement and the TAS Swim Team will once again be at the fore when the Age Nationals is contested in 5-10 April 2010.

In closing, I would like to pass on my sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed to the smooth running of the TAS Aquatic Centre this year.

The School, under the guidance of Principal Mr Christopher Daunt Watney, has been extremely supportive of the swim program.

Thanks also to Kevin Byrne, President of the TAS Swimming Club, the Board of TAS Club and Roxanne Wu for all their continued support.

Special thanks to Karen Weeden our website master. We receive so many positive comments about the quality of our website.

My co-workers at the Aquatic Centre have continued to offer the excellent service to which everyone has become accustomed – Debbie Houston manages the bookings and sales. Don Christensen, with his exclusive job variety (teaching, pumps room maintenance, water quality etc!!!), Doug Telford, Ian Parmenter, Mandela Parmenter (Marlin Coast Program), Kate Christensen, Michelle Williams, Bill Evens, Morgan Knabe, Carly Duncombe. Thank you to each and everyone.

*The membership and swimmers of TAS Swimming Club, is of course the backbone of the program and it is to you all that I pass on my sincerest thanks for your support over the past year and best wishes for a healthy and happy 2010.*

There is much to look forward to in 2010, especially for those in the Age Group and Learn-to-Swim programs.

Our club membership is as diverse as the population of the country in which we live.

At TAS Aquatic Centre we hope that during 2009 we have been able to offer you the services you seek and have been able to address your individual needs as they have arisen.

## ***Happy New Year***

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### ***What Happens When a Swimmer Goes Through a Growth Spurt?***

By: Peter Wells,  
APA Sports Physiotherapist and Australian Swimming Team Physiotherapist.  
(From "Swimming Matters")

*Why is it that some children, who have been swimming along nicely suddenly lose style and give the impression that they've lost touch with their arms and legs?*

*What's happening to the child to cause this apparent disorganization in their movements?*

This phenomenon is commonly seen in children going through a growth spurt and it's to do with balance and coordination.

During growth spurts there is a huge hormonal upheaval that the body has to deal with.

In growing bodies, the long bones (legs / arms) grow at a faster rate than the soft tissues (muscles, tendons etc.)

This leads to increases in tightness of the muscles and decreases in coordination as the nervous system tries to adjust to all of these changes.

Children often take a "baby giraffe-like" appearance at this time.

The computer system (brain and nervous system) is reprogramming itself for the new length, strength and lever arms in the growing body.

If the growth is slow and steady then the brain can cope and keep up with this but when growth is rapid (as it often is!) then the neural system struggles.

When the growth rate slows and allows the neural system to catch up, normal coordinated movement is able to return.

*It is important during times like these for the coach, parent and child to be patient.*

*The coach should explain what is happening and reassure the child and parent that is quite normal and that it will rectify itself given time.*

*This time may be from weeks to months (sometimes even 12 months if rapid growth continues/persists!)*

Of course if the parents have any concerns then consult your qualified health practitioner.

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### ***How to Help Girl Athletes Get through Puberty***

By: eHow Sports and Fitness Editor

Millions of girls play sports - and this number continues to grow. One of the most important aspects of girls' participation in sports is that the girls continue to be active while facing the challenges of puberty

#### **Step1**

Relish the benefits. Experts stress that the physical activity of sports is an extremely important health benefit for young girls.

#### **Step2**

Expect some challenges. Girls drop out of sports at a rate six times higher than do boys, many of them during puberty.

#### **Step3**

Keep high standards. Despite certain effects of puberty on performance, puberty has no effect on skill development. Skill can increase with practice.

#### **Step4**

Don't be concerned with delayed menstrual periods. Delayed menstruation is not medically harmful as long as it occurs by age 18.

#### **Step5**

Consult a doctor. You can put your mind to rest concerning any aspects of sports and puberty. You're better off with a doctor who understands and is supportive of youth sports.

### Step6

Make sports a positive part of puberty. With all of the physical, social, and emotional ups and downs, sports can give important focus and direction to a girl and her family.

### Step7

Be on the lookout for inequality. Girls are still often not given the same opportunity as boys, despite great advances. Make sure they are, especially during this sensitive time.

### Tips & Warnings

- Get ready for the ride. Puberty may be difficult, but it can be made smoother if you accept its inevitability and know that it will pass.
- Communicate. Resist any urge to take the silent approach. Encourage your daughter to talk about her feelings.
- Seek out others. Encourage your daughter to find a role model or someone in whom she can confide.
- Bring in the coach. Enlist the help and advice of a coach, preferably one with experience in this area.
- Set goals. Keep your daughter focused on a long-term sports goal, such as making a desired team, to get her through difficult times.
- Watch what she eats. Pay special attention to good nutrition, particularly avoiding fad diets.
- If you have any questions or concerns, contact a physician or other health-care professional before engaging in any activity related to health and diet. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment.

## Boys and Puberty

*Reviewed by: Steven Dowshen, MD*

*Date reviewed: February 2008*

*Originally reviewed: Barbara P. Homeier, MD*

A lot of changes happen as you grow up, especially as you reach **puberty** (say: **pyoo**-bur-tee), the name for the time when your body begins to develop and change.

Girls start developing **breasts** and get their **periods** — signs they are growing into women.

But how do boys know they are growing into men? Let's find out.

For a guy, there isn't just one event or sign that you're growing up.

There are lots of them, including your body growing bigger, your voice changing, and hair sprouting everywhere.

Most boys begin puberty between the ages of 9 and 14. But keep in mind that puberty starts when a boy's body is ready, and everyone grows at his own pace.

### *Here are some of the questions boys have. Why Are Girls Taller Than Me?*

You might have noticed that some of the girls you know are taller than the boys.

But you've probably noticed that out of the adults you know, most of the men are taller than the women.

What's going on?

Well, girls get a head start on puberty — and growing taller — because they usually start these changes between the ages of 8 and 13.

Most boys, on the other hand, don't begin until between the ages of 9 and 14. So that's why girls are often taller than boys during that time.

Most boys may catch up — and even grow taller than girls.

But it's also important to remember that your genetics play a role in **height**.

So if your mom and dad are tall, you're more likely to be tall.

And if your mom and dad are kind of short, you may be short, too.

But nothing is definite.

You have to wait and see how it turns out, but you can also talk to a doctor if you're concerned.

Remember — not every adult male is tall. Many men who are considered "short" have gone on to have careers in the movies, the military and even professional basketball!

There aren't any exercises or magic pills to make you grow tall.

But by **being active** and eating **nutritious foods**, you're helping your body grow up healthy, just the way it should.

### **When Will I Get Muscles?**

During puberty, some boys might become worried about their bodies after seeing what some of their friends look like.

For instance, lots of boys are concerned about their **muscles**.

You may have already noticed some boys starting to get chest muscles (called the **pectoralis** muscles or pecs for short).

Others may have broad shoulders (the **deltoids**, or delts for short).

Other boys might still be slimmer and smaller. Remember that puberty happens on its own schedule, so there's no rushing it if you're a little slower to develop muscles.

Maybe you've considered lifting weights to help yourself get bigger.

It's important to know that if you haven't quite reached puberty, this will *tone* your muscles, but it won't *build up* any muscles yet.

Eating nutritious food and being active (like riding your bike, swimming, and playing sports) will help you be a kid who's strong and fit. In time, you'll reach puberty and you can start building your muscles, too.

If you decide to try lifting weights, first let your doctor know you are interested.

He or she may tell you to hold off on weightlifting for a bit or give you some advice on how to start.

If your doctor discourages weightlifting, try some other ways to work out.

Resistance bands, which are like big rubber bands, are a great way to help build your strength without putting too much strain on your muscles.

If your doctor recommends weightlifting, here are some tips:

- **Have a qualified coach or trainer supervise you.** It's smart to have somebody show you the proper way to lift weights. This will help you gain strength and prevent injury.
- **Use lighter weights.** Your coach or trainer can recommend the right amount. Lifting heavy weights can cause injuries and then you'll have to wait until you recover before you can work out again.
- **Do repetitions.** It's better to lift a smaller amount of weight a bunch of times than to try to lift a heavy weight once or twice.
- **Rest.** Let your body have a break at least every other day.

### **Michael Ursu, Head Coach Comments:**

*In many instances in our club's recent and past history parents associate their child's under performance with weakness of the swimming program. Their lack of understanding about what was going on with their children's body led them to transferring their children to other clubs in their dream to their children's success. However the move to other programs/clubs achieved very negative results in the child's performance. Let's learn from those isolated incidents and be patient with our child's swimming performance during the puberty years....it will not last very long. However it can have dramatic physical and mental consequences if not handled properly!*

### **Factors to be considered when developing an athlete for the modern freestyle sprint events.**

How much speed is required to be successful in the 100m freestyle?

#### **Men Stats:**

- Alexander Popov 50f/s p.b.- 21.64  
100f/s p.b- 48.21 = 2 x 50 p.b.+ 4.93
- Eamon Sullivan 50 f/s p.b.-21.28  
100 f/s p.b.- 47.52 = 2 x 50 p.b.+ 5.04 sec.

### **Women Stats:**

- Britta Steffan- 50 f/s p.b. 24.66  
100 f/s p.b. 53.30 = 2 x 50p.b.+3.98 sec.
- Libby Lenton - 50 f/s p.b.- 24.58  
100 p.b.- 53.36 = 2 x 50p.b.= 4.18 sec.
- Libby Trickett - 50 f/s p.b.- 23.97  
100 f/s p.b.-52.88 = 2 x 50 p.b.+4.94 sec.
- Cate Campbell- 50 f/s p.b.-24.30  
100 f/s p.b.-53.81 = 2 x 50 p.b.+5.21 sec.

### **What is sprinting?**

- Swimming as fast as possible using the arms and legs for propulsion as efficiently as possible whilst holding the body in a posture which presents as little resistance as possible.

### **Is speed developed or inherited?**

- Most swimmers could be developed either way i.e. 200m and over events or 200m or less if developed from a young age.
- Successful 50/100 swimmers will have a higher percentage of fast twitch fibre.
- What about the brain – sprinting is more than about having extreme anaerobic output.

### **Speed training-within the muscle**

- Predominantly affects the concentration and activity of specific enzymes in the muscle. Resulting in an increase in the contribution of fast twitch muscle fibre and a decrease in the contribution of slow twitch muscle fibre.

This neuromuscular pattern results in a greater output of propulsion force and a more efficient application of propulsion force.

### **Speed training-the neural effect helps to develop the followings:**

- Improvement in the speed of communication between the brain and the muscles
- This increases the ability to co-ordinate the limbs which enables them to carry out the desirable stroke patterns to facilitate fast swimming.

### **How to create the sprinter?**

- Cate Campbell couldn't rate over 45 until she turned 12 years old.

- The megacycle from age 9 to 14 she undertook five years of speed development.

50m P.B.s at each age

- Age 9 = 42.0; Age 10 = 36.5; Age 11 = 32.8; Age 12 = 27.78; Age 13 = 26.20; Age 14 = 24.89; Age 15 = 24.30

Note:

- Between the age of 12 = 27.78 and 13 = 26.20, Cate Campbell raced the 50 f/s 62 times, only 6 of those efforts were in competition.

### **How should I coach the 50 freestylers?**

The 3 main areas to be attended are:

- Start- first 15m
- Front end-first 25m
- Back end-last 25m

### **The start:**

- React quickly driving through hips
- Enter cleanly with minimum splash (resistance)
- The depth of dive is an individual thing
- Change angles gently
- Strive for clean breakouts without loss of velocity
- Apply power to the water, not water to the power.

### **Developing front end speed:**

- Sprint without fatigue
- The whip cracking theory
- When they stop going fast, stop the set
- Consider the neural effects of sprinting
- Be patient between drops in speed
- Train speed at appropriate times of the season-not in exam week etc

### **50m Developing the back end speed:**

Cate Campbell

- Aus. Age Nationals, 26.20 as first 25 = 12.10, 2<sup>nd</sup> 25 = 14.10 drop of 2 sec.
- Duel In the Pool(USA), 25.08 as first 25 = 11.75, second 25 = 13.33 drop of 1.58 sec.
- Japan International, 24.48 as first 25 = 11.53, second 25 = 12.95, drop of 1.42 sec.
- Olympic trials, 24.30 as first 25 = 11.42, second 25 = 12.88, drop of 1.46 seconds.

### ***Coaching for the 100 freestyle:***

#### ***Front End:***

Libby:

PB for 50 = 23.97, First 50 = 25.44, drop of 1.47 sec.

Cate:

PB for 50 = 24.30, First 50 = 25.91, drop of 1.61 sec.

Britta:

PB for 50 = 24.66, First 50 = 25.84, drop of 1.18 sec.

#### ***Back End:***

Libby:

First 50 = 25.44, Second 50 = 27.44, 100 = 52.88 drop of 2 sec.

Cate:

First 50 = 25.91, Second 50 = 27.90, 100 = 53.81 drop of 1.99 sec.

Britta

First 50 = 25.84, Second 50 = 27.46, 100 = 53.30 drop of 1.62 sec.

- Back end speed training must involve specific energy system (training lactates sets, speed work, stroke counts and stroke rates).

- Speed and stroke rates must not fall below those targeted for future back end speed goal times

The coach should aim for a steady progression in lieu of big drop in times.

#### ***Energy contributions:***

How much volume do sprinters really need?

- Gernadi Touretski was famous for giving his sprinters 100km weeks

- Volume alone doesn't improve back end speed.

#### ***Aerobic training for sprinters:***

- 50m swimmers-breathing

- All aerobic work should be given a technical emphasis incorporating skill acquisition.
  - Mix it up, keep it interesting.
  - Consider cross training for those athletes who are suited to land work.
  - Avoid anything that will be detrimental to their stroke mechanics

#### ***Introducing speed:***

##### ***The developmental years:***

- Teach great technique in all 5 strokes

- Introduce quality controlled sprinting without killing creativity.
- Explore stroke rate limits.
- Encourage fast, fun swimming with short races and relays.
- Look at progressions - 10m fast, 15m fast etc.
- All aerobic work to be made of short repeats with sufficient rest.
- Technical focus in all swimming.

#### ***Start the progression***

- Set up training weeks to encourage fast swimming at specific times of the week-switch on / switch off.
- Create the expectation and the environment
- 25m within 0.2 of p.b.; 50m within 0.8 of p.b.
- Make sure swimmers are physically and mentally fresh enough.
- Go fast or go recovery.
- Predominantly neural development at first.

#### ***National age swimmers:***

- Continue speed development.
- Introduce back end speed sets without impacting on future potential front end speed.
- Think long term.
- Continue skill acquisition- the time to learn is Now.

#### ***Open swimmers:***

- Continue progression in all areas in and out of the pool.
- Individualise programming as needed, taking into account athletes various needs.
- Develop your coaching skills so that you are able to prepare your athletes for the next level, or else be prepared to hand them on.

#### ***Speed development at all ages:***

- Sprint without fatigue
- The whip cracking theory
- When they stop going fast, stop the set
- Consider the neural effects of sprinting
- Be patient between drops in speed
- Train speed at appropriate times of the season-not in exam week etc

### ***Progression from the training pool to the competition pool:***

- Skill development-strive to be technically great conscious process.
- Speed development-conscious process
- Back end speed development / conditioning with quality control-conscious process.
- As training period progresses strive for automaticity in sprinting / pacing-hollow mind.
- Get ready to race

#### ***Extra stuff***

- Speed through endurance is speed by accident.
- Never limit your athletes by telling them how fast you think they could go.
- It takes years to build confidence in an athlete-be careful what you expose them to and when.
- Freshen your sprinters every time you race them.
- The future of fast swimming lies in neural Development

**End**

### ***Michael Phelps going to great lengths still in search of the impossible***

**By: Matthew Syed (USA)**

It is strange, the moments that change history.

In 1997, a shy, "problem" schoolboy from a working-class family in Baltimore, Maryland, was told that he would "never achieve anything in life".

It was the kind of throwaway remark that many schoolteachers - overworked, overstressed, underpaid - make about disruptive students. But for Michael Phelps, at that time and place in his young, faltering life, it changed everything.

"I still remember the way I felt," Phelps says during an end-of-year interview in Manchester. "I had just started swimming seriously and those comments from my teacher seemed to burn deep inside.

I was often made to feel like an outsider at school because I had Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder [ADHD] and struggled to fit in.

But I thought to myself: 'You can think whatever you want, but I am going to prove you wrong.' I am not sure why it fired me up so much, but it did."

From that day to this, Phelps's life has been one long sacrifice in pursuit of the impossible.

His daily routine is so punishing and so neurotically relentless that it strays into the vicinity of masochism.

He does not simply want to win; he wants to set goals that inspire incredulity and disbelief, as if reveling in an eternal cycle of proving people - anybody - wrong.

When Phelps announced in advance of the Olympic Games in Beijing that he was aiming for eight gold medals in the pool, Ian Thorpe, the Australian swimming legend, said (quite reasonably) that the American was unlikely to achieve his target.

Phelps responded by pinning the offending remarks to his locker and staring at them every morning until the day he left for China.

"When people doubt me, it gives me huge motivation," he says. "It is like the negativity is the fuel that takes me through the water day after day.

"I want to show that I can achieve things they consider impossible.

The first time it was the teacher at school, but now I trawl the internet looking for anyone else who doesn't think I am going to cut it. It can be competitors, journalists, whatever.

"The more negative they are, the more determined - and the more certain - I am to do it. And you know what? If I have an ambition in my mind, whatever it is, nothing is going to stop me. Nothing."

He sounds almost pathological as he describes the nature and intensity of his ambition. But this, of course, is the stuff of greatness.

Phelps was born in the Lake Point area of Baltimore County in 1985.

His parents divorced a few years later and his mother - whom the swimmer describes as an "amazing woman:

wise, tough and incredibly strong" - brought up her son and two daughters almost single-handed.

But it was evident early on that the young Phelps had difficulty focusing on anything for more than a few moments at a time.

"As a very little boy, I was not just always on the go; I simply could not sit still," Phelps writes in his autobiography.

"I would twirl pens and pencils between my fingers. I made faces at cameras. I climbed on everything. I never shut up. I had a question for everything, and wouldn't stop asking questions until I got the answer. If then."

It was for this reason that he had so many problems fitting in with his class-mates and was considered unruly by his teachers.

Phelps was prescribed Ritalin in sixth grade to combat ADHD and, for a while, took the drug three times a day.

But his ultimate redemption was to be found in the pool.

"What I discovered soon after starting to swim was that the pool was a safe haven," he says.

"Two walls at either end. Lane lines on either side.

A black stripe on the bottom for direction. I could go fast in the pool; it turned out, in part because being in the pool slowed down my mind. In the water I felt, for the first time, in control."

I ask if the extent of his ambition - and the inspiration he derives from proving people wrong - is a consequence of his marginalisation at school.

"Yes, I think that is part of it, for sure," he says.

"Proving yourself is a way of gaining acceptance and showing what you are really made of.

Even when I was hugging my mom after winning my eighth gold in Beijing, my mind was flitting to that teacher and what she had said. God, it felt good!"

Has he seen the teacher since he left school? "No, I haven't, but it would have been a lot of fun if I had."

Phelps's exploits in China transformed his profile around the world, with invitations to appear on *Saturday Night Live* and other top US television shows, but they also brought attention of a rather different kind.

In January, the *News of the World* ran a front page story with a picture showing Phelps using a bong, a device used to smoke marijuana.

Phelps admitted to "behaviour that was regrettable and demonstrated bad judgment" and USA Swimming suspended him from competition for three months.

I ask if the photo was an unjustified intrusion into his private life or an inevitable consequence of his celebrity.

"I think the media has been this way for a long time," he says.

"Sport has become more and more public and I think that once you have got to a certain level you have to accept that the press is going to be interested in your private life.

Of course, that means you have to be more careful about the people around you and who you are going to trust.

But it also means that you have to learn from your mistakes. I hope I have done that."

Today, Phelps's eyes are set firmly on London 2012 and another tilt at history.

He has already ditched the ultra-fast 100 per cent polyurethane suits that will be banned from next month, suffering a number of defeats as a consequence, not least in the 200 metres butterfly at the Duel in the Pool on Saturday.

But this does not worry him. "Everything that happens between now and 2012 is about giving myself the best shot at the Olympics," he says.

"Starting as early as possible with the new suits was a no-brainer."

When I ask if he has figured out his goals for the London Games yet, he smiles.

"Yes, I have worked them out and written them down," he says.

"But I am not going to tell anybody what they are for a while yet.

Not even my mother knows. The only person in the loop is Bob [Bowman, Phelps's long-time coach]."

Phelps continues to evoke the aura of the outsider, a man who is not altogether sure where he fits in.

Perhaps that is his strength as a professional athlete, the reason why his competitors should be fearful of another bout of Olympic dominance come London.

He seems to have no obvious comfort zone beyond the rigours of the pool.

I ask whether he ever doubts his own ability to achieve his exacting goals; that he might fail to prove his detractors wrong?

"If you are passionate about something, you are going to get there come what may," he says.

"People say that I have great talent, but in my opinion excellence has nothing to do with talent. It is about what you choose to believe and how determined you are to get there. The mind is more powerful than anything else."

### **Inside the mind of a champion**

The art of Olympic performance, by Michael Phelps

"I think of nothing. I clear my mind so it is absolutely empty of negative thoughts.

When you are about to come face to face with the moment of truth, after four years of sacrifice, the last thing you want in your head are thoughts of what might go wrong.

"It may not sound easy, but this state of mind comes naturally when you have put in the hard work.

If you have done the right things in practice, and if you have done them over and over so often they have lodged inside your mind and body, you ought to have complete confidence in your abilities.

"Delivering in the pool is, in many ways, the easy part.

It is the icing on the cake. You know what you have to do.

You know how to do it. And you know that nobody can stop you."

.....  
***From Athens to the Eternal City, this young swimmer's incredible journey is now decorated in the gold she so craved***

Before 2009, there had been four major Australian teams named since Guehrer went to Athens, and her name had not been among them. The women she used to race – Libby Trickett, Stephanie Rice, Leisel Jones and Jodie Henry – all now owned Olympic gold, and most were world champions.

But this year, her 1.85m frame stuffed with confidence from success on 2008's FINA Swimming World Cup circuit, Guehrer not only became a Dolphin again; suddenly she was a world champion.

On an August night in Rome, Guehrer stunned her better-credentialed rivals, winning the world championship 50m butterfly final.

The work had paid off, yet still there those who wanted to denigrate her achievement.

"I don't care what other people think," she says. "Nobody backed me to make the Olympic team but I did, and nobody backed me to win the world championship.

Does it matter if they don't take me seriously?

No, not at all ... I do." It's hard to believe Guehrer could ever struggle with self-belief.

She says her cockiness helped her become an Olympian in 2004, but labels Athens as "surreal", even if it was the realisation of a lifelong dream.

A hip injury and a post-Olympic comedown stifled her career.

The pressure Guehrer placed upon herself added to her problems, especially when she failed to make the team for the 2005 world titles.

By 2006 her career was over. "I hit such a low and it just got worse because there was no balance in my life," she says. "Swimming wasn't my first priority, it was my *only* priority.

We put pressure on ourselves and anything a millimetre short of perfect is failure.

It reached the point where I hated swimming. I decided I was going to take time off, but I soon realised I was just stalling the inevitable.

I needed to retire." That should have been the end of it.

Swimmers don't make comebacks. They start young, finish young, and when the alarm no longer goes off at 4.30am, they sleep-in.

**When she was six**, Guehrer's family moved from Adelaide to the Gold Coast.

Three years on, she was at a school swimming carnival and expected to win.

After discovering her conqueror actually trained, she informed her mother it was time to ditch synchronised swimming and join the racers.

She spent four years in Denis Cotterell's junior squad before the Guehrers were off to Brisbane.

"That's where I got my lucky break.

Mum rang up Scott Volkens and said, 'I know you're a good coach, you coach Susie O'Neill. My daughter wants to go all the way. Do you know anywhere she can go?'

Scott said bring her around and we'll see how she goes.

"I was 13 and so excited. Susie was my role model and I tried my absolute hardest.

I wanted to impress Susie and I was lucky enough to be offered a squad position.

" After the Sydney Olympics, O'Neill retired and Volkens took a role with the Queensland Academy of Sport.

His deputy, Widmer, took over. Around the same time the statuesque Guehrer decided to dip her toe into another pool.

"I did some modelling work when I was 15 or 16," she says, "a couple of catwalk shows, some photo shoots.

I had an opportunity to go down that path, but swimming was what I really wanted." She enjoyed success in junior competitions, but making the step into a senior Australian team still appeared a distance away.

Then, on a 2003 trip with the Queensland team, Guehrer toyed with backstroke, "nothing serious, just for a bit of fun".

At least it wasn't serious until December: "The Olympic trials were four months away, but I started to believe I could make the team.

I still needed to improve by three seconds, but for whatever reason – maybe it's because I'm a bit cocky – I just thought: 'Yeah, I can do that.'

" Guehrer qualified for the final at the trials, but was the slowest of the eight Olympic hopefuls.

Armed with advice that every time she thought about the end result she should push it from her mind, Guehrer produced, finished second to Giaan Rooney, and became an Olympian.

**After leaving the sport** in 2006, Guehrer worked different jobs, set up an online swimming-costume business and enrolled in international relations at university, but still felt "kind of lost, needing to find who I was as a person".

*At the year's end, she was still doing the odd clinic for the Queensland Academy of Sport and found herself in Cairns where she met coach Michael Ursu, who has served as president of the World Swimming Coaches Association.*

*He told her she was too talented to retire. “When some athletes retire they really hate the sport. She didn’t,” recalls Ursu.*

*“Technically, everybody knew she was the best in the world.*

*Her freestyle is beautiful; I use her backstroke to teach my swimmers.*

*I thought she just needed a bit of a prod.”*

*The poke from Ursu was precisely what the-little-girl-lost needed.*

*She hadn’t peaked, still had years and potential in her veins, and hearing someone else say those thing kick-started the comeback process.*

Feeling she needed a major change, Guehrer contacted Ian Pope, and headed to Melbourne to join his squad.



Under pressure to succeed in backstroke, Pope suggested she try butterfly instead.

Smart move ... she won the 50m butterfly at the 2008 national titles.

She wouldn’t be going to Beijing, but she would be travelling.

Guehrer decided to tackle the FINA Swimming World Cup, a six-week circuit of short-course racing.

Heading into the final night in Germany, Guehrer and Swede Therese Alshammar were locked in a battle for the overall women’s title.

Both swam the 50m butterfly. Guehrer came out on top, and broke the world record.

In six weeks she won \$44,500 in prize money and \$156,000 as overall World Cup winner.

“Finally the balance is there,” she says.

“There are still times when I have down days with my swimming, but because of that balance, it’s now not the end of the world.

” Guehrer admits the London Olympics are the goal, but refuses to think three years ahead.

Nor is she thinking about redemption for Athens. “If I’d done really well in Athens, maybe I would have kept driving myself into the ground and not enjoyed swimming and ended up quitting for good.

I believe in fate. As long as we make the best of what we do, we’re not wasting any time.”

### *Swim Short Cuts:*

- Drowning is the leading cause of injury related death in Australia for under 5s.
- For every drowning, many more are left with permanent brain damage.
- Learn to swim .... its great!
- While swimming lessons are not a substitute for proper supervision and barriers, being able to swim well provides an extra layer of protection; and enhances physical, social and emotional wellbeing.
- The sport of swimming has produced thousands of participants who have established and

developed a multitude of skills that will be useful throughout their entire life.

The skills developed by participating in a structured swimming training program include:

- Improvements in self discipline.
- Commitment
- Dedication
- Time management
- Independence
- Taking responsibilities
- Working together
- Winning and Loosing
- Increase in school grades
- Swimmers learn how to improve from making mistakes and being defeated to turn temporary setbacks into long term gains.

- “The real value in youth sports is teaching the kinds of character lessons that are learned from striving on the field – lessons that bear ultimate fruit years later in a person’s profession, values, citizenship responsibilities, and family life.”  
Jim Thompson

- Swimming successfully is as much about time management as it is about training hard. Fitting in training, schoolwork, rest and recovery and having some time to yourself is a difficult juggling act even for the most committed and dedicated athlete.  
Wayne Goldsmith
- “Every year since I have been swimming competitively, I have set goals for myself. In writing. The goal sheet was mandatory. I got used to it and it became a habit”  
Michael Phelps

This beat the previous world record by 1.6 seconds. (no big deal in the days of plastic bag suits.)

In 18 months, Zige improved from 2:09 to 2:01.81.

Ridiculous.

The only other times we’ve seen improvements like this, the swimmer has later been found guilty of doping. That’s history, not opinion.

From 2004 when she went 2:13.28, it took her until 2007 to get to 2:09. Then during 2008 and 2009, she goes 2:01.81?

And in the year of a home Olympic games, in the LZR suit as she swam the 2:01.81 in 2009, she swam just 2:04.18 in The Beijing pool.

Her coach for the past nine years is the same man, Jin Wei.

So what’s the secret coach? More turtle blood soup? New Training methods?

Please, this is literally UNBELIEVABLE.

A nation that allows convicted Doping pusher Zhou Ming back on deck at its National Games, when he was supposed to be banned for life by China and should have been banned for life according to FINA Rules, does not get any “breaks” in public opinion.

Individuals in many nations have been caught cheating. None deserve our forgiveness.

This looks like another in a long line of “unbelievable” swims.

Don’t believe it. 7.2 second drops don’t happen at the world level in 18 months over 200 meters. Unless it’s a doped performance. That’s what history shows.

## ***Really, Truly “Unbelievable”***

**By John Leonard**

China’s Liu Zige went 2:01.81 for the 200 meter butterfly at the National Games of China in October.

**Come on. .... Be serious.**

**2009 State Short Course Championships**  
**12 to 18 December**  
**Results:**

Dear All

I want to extend my sincerest thanks and congratulations to every swimmer that participated as well as all the parents for their contribution to making the trip to Brisbane such a success.

Please find below some of the results and comparisons with last year results where applicable.

*Michael Ursu*  
*Swimming Director*

Swimmer	Event	Place	Place	Place	2009 Time	2008 Time	PB
Kotuku Ngawati (15 years of age)	200 IM	G			2.17.58	2.21.57	4sec
	400 IM	G			4.54.57	5.10.69	16sec
	200 Back	G			2.18.46	2.19.13	1sec
	100 Back		S		1.04.64	1.04.98	0.5sec
	100 Breast			B	1.15.06	1.18.66	3sec
	Relay Open	G					
Total=		4	1	1			
Jack Gerrard (15Y)	200 Back	G			2.09.48	2.18.46	9sec
	100 Back		S		1.00.56	1.03.64	3sec
	200 IM			B	2.12.00	2.23.16	11sec
	Relay			B			
Total=		1	1	2			
		<b>2009 Place</b>	<b>2008 Place</b>	<b>Places Improved</b>			
Daniel Esposito(13Y)	200 Breast	8	10	2	2.54.99	3.07.12	13sec
	100 Breast	10	14	4	1.19.85	1.27.84	8sec
	200 Free	14	15	1	2.12.51	2.22.36	10sec
	100 Fly	15	16	1	1.08.29	1.14.44	6sec
	200 IM	14	14		2.34.32	2.41.04	7sec
	100 Free	20	17	+3	1.00.90	1.05.42	5sec

<i>Swimmer</i>	<i>Event</i>	<b>2009 Place</b>	<b>2008 Place</b>	<b>Places Improved</b>	<b>2009 Time</b>	<b>2008 Time</b>	<b>PB</b>
Rachael Gilholm(13Y)	200 Back	11	11	+1	2.33.29	2.40.34	7sec
	100 Breast	21	47	26	1.24.22	1.30.31	6sec
	100 Fly	34	53	19	1.14.34	1.21.16	7sec
	100 Back	28	17	+11	1.13.62	1.15.47	2 sec
	100 Free	26	20	+6	1.04.04	1.05.11	1sec
Clinton Cave(16Y)	100 Free	25	24	+1	56.50	58.20	2sec
	200 IM	11	15	4	2.17.60	2.23.62	6sec
	100 Breast	10	20	10	1.14.81	1.17.82	3sec
	100 Fly	16	17	1	1.00.65	1.03.29	3sec
Ciara Cescotto(12Y)	100 Fly	47			1.20.09		
	200 IM	44	36	+8	2.49.68	3.01.23	2sec
	100 Back	43	39	4	1.19.07	1.24.63	5sec
	100 Breast	51	50	+1	1.32.48	1.39.54	7sec
	200 Free	56			2.29.32	2.32.94	3sec
	200 Breast	38			3.16.18	3.12.48	+4sec
	100 Free	66	52	+14	1.09.11	1.12.93	3sec
	200 Back	27			2.50.69	2.52.00	2sec
Tegan McCarty(12Y) (Attending for the first time)	200 IM	65			2.58.91	3.07.17	9sec
	100 Breast	18			1.26.57	1.29.19	3sec
	200 Breast	14			3.05.72	3.07.17	2sec
	100 Freestyle	95			1.11.39	1.11.96	0.5sec
Katie Schmidt(13) (was very sick, spent one night in hospital)	100 Free	67			1.07.32	1.08.32	1sec

<i>Swimmer</i>	<i>Event</i>	<b>2009 Place</b>	<b>2008 Place</b>	<b>Places Improved</b>	<i>2009 Time</i>	<i>2008 Time</i>	<i>PB</i>
Tessa Jackson(15Y)	100 Back	22			1.12.87		
	200 IM	19			2.36.32		
	100 Breast	20			1.23.98		
	50 Free	83			28.58		
	200 Free	24			2.16.01		
	Relay 50 Free, Open	G					
Isabel Byrne(11Y) (Attending for the first time)	100 Fly	47			1.27.98		
	200 IM	28			2.55.21		
	100 Free	64			1.14.23		
	100 Back	61			1.27.50		
	100 Breast	53			1.36.98		
Mark Ragel(14Y) (Attending for the first time)	100 Back	24			1.08.26		
	200 Breast	14			2.44.11		
	100 Free	43			1.00.93		
	100 Fly	25			1.06.74		
	100 Breast	17			1.16.03		
	200 IM	31			2.32.20		
Marcus Buschel (15)	100 Breast	18			1.15.51	1.19.08	4 sec
	200 Breast	11			2.43.67	2.45.82	2 sec
	100 Fly	32			1.05.62	1.06.06	0.5sec
Georgia Weeden(10Y)	Relay 50Fs,Club				34.52 34.85		
	Relay 50Fs,Region				34.85		
Jack Hare(13Y)	Relay 50Fs,Club				27.27		

	Relay 50Fs,Region				28.13		
		<b>2009 Place</b>	<b>2008 Place</b>	<b>Places Improved</b>			
Jack Gerrard	Relay 50 Back, Club				28.64 28.93		
	50 Free				24.98 25.66		
Kotuku Ngawati	Relay 50 Breast, Region				34.54		
	Relay 50 Back				31.48		
	Relay 50 Free				26.58 26.88		
Clinton Cave	Relay 50 Free				24.78 25.69 25.86		
	Relay 50 Fly				26.84		
Mark Ragel	Relay 50 Breast				34.11		
	Relay 50 Back				31.38		
	Relay 50 Free				27.91		
Marcus Buschels	Relay 50 Fly				28.83		
Ciara Cescotto (12Y)	Relay 50 Free				30.55		
Tessa Jackson	Relay 50 Free				27.25 27.45 28.34 27.52		